

# Writing is Like a 3-Day Loop Hike

Imagine you are planning a 3-day loop hike over a mountain pass to a lake.

(characters)

**Where are you going?** (setting)

How long will you be gone?

What time of year is it?

**What will you need to take with you?** (details)

backpacks, sleeping bag, food, clothing, boots, map, flashlight, etc

**What obstacles happen along the way?** (sequenced story problems)

As you climb, the obstacles become more and more difficult:

fallen trees

streams with no bridges or broken bridges

dangerous icy/snow-covered pass (trail invisible)

**How will your P.O.V character move through each problem?** (solutions)

Climb over the fallen log to 1st night's camp site

Walk through the stream, holding your pack high to keep it dry to keep moving up the mountain

Devise a clever plan to get beyond the snow before nightfall to find a safe place to spend night #2

Move on to your destination (climax) the mountain lake you came to see and photograph

**How will the adventure end?** (ending)

How will you take the characters back to their normal life?

**You want your reader to:**

Follow you as the story develops.

Feel your obstacles make sense (maybe try to guess what comes next).

Feel satisfied with the way you solved the problems.

Stay interested until the journey/the story ends.

# Fiction Writing Clues

## Describe:

### Who: the characters

names, ages (maybe); how they look/act/move/think

### What: character's problems or actions

what action must they take?

### Who solves their problem? (should be protagonist)

### Where: location

Are they at home/at work/on a trip/special event?

Are they in a fictional land? a dream?

### When: the time

Does time of day/week/month/year matter? Share why.

Did it happen long ago, yesterday or in the future?

### Why: what do you, the Author, want the reader to know?

Release information as needed

Hold back important details as long as possible

## Use:

### Your 5 senses

Share what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

Use weather if it changes the struggle along the way.

### Vibrant Verbs

Find more descriptive words than 'went', 'run', 'got'...

### Details, details, details

Draw us a word picture to put us in the scene.

### Interesting nouns

Instead of 'store', tell us the type of store, etc.

### Illustration

Use words to share important details on each page.

## Check:

Word Choice - Is there a better, more descriptive word to use?

Beginning, Middle and End - Does your story have all 3 parts?

SNT (Show not Tell) - Are your characters 'doing things'?

Add a surprise (when possible)

## Then:

Read aloud to yourself to check the flow and scout out word changes.

Ask another person to read your work, ask questions, share ideas.

Revise: check spelling, conventions, story flow, etc.

Step away as long as possible before you write your final copy (to turn in).

## Very Short Story Outline

(A) \_\_\_\_\_ wants \_\_\_\_\_.  
because \_\_\_\_\_,  
but \_\_\_\_\_ gets in the way.

(B) \_\_\_\_\_ will intercede by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to get \_\_\_\_\_  
when) \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
and then \_\_\_\_\_ happens.

(A) solves the problem by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### KEY:

(A) represents the main character

(B) represents the obstacle (a person, thing, or event) that gets in the way



If I were...

Select one topic. Write 3 sentences to share your ideas.

a plant

an animal

on a TV show

a candy bar

a doodle

orange or yellow

a word

a book character

a piece of furniture

a cartoon character

a tree

purple or green

a car

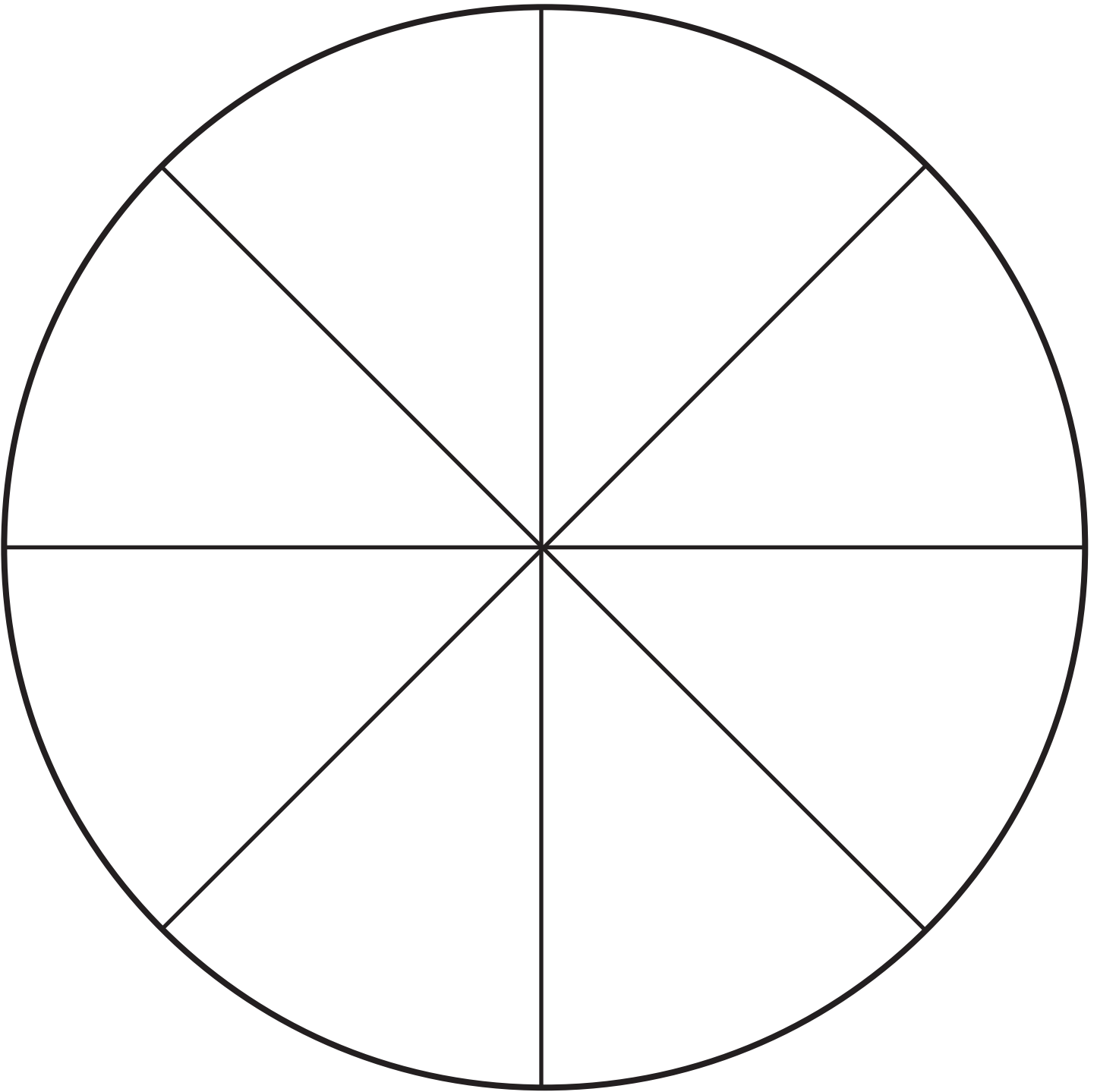
a ball

... I'd \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



## Write Around the Circle by \_\_\_\_\_

It's fun to write about what you know, but try being creative too. Write in different genres or kinds of stories. Every time you complete a story in one of these categories, color in the space. You may also use this circle to rewrite a story by telling it in a different voice or a different genre.



# FRESH Writing Ideas for the End of the Year

## 15 Favorite Words (word search)

1. Ask each student to share up to 15 words related of a topic of their choice.
2. Each word must be 15 letters or less
3. Create individual word searches using [tools.atozteacherstuff.com/word-search-maker](https://tools.atozteacherstuff.com/word-search-maker). (Takes about 3-5 minutes to type in the words and make a print.)
4. Reproduce the word searches for classmates to use.

## How to

1. Students use a step-by-step approach to write out how to do a simple task: make sharpen a pencil, put on a jacket and zip to closed, walk to the library from their classroom, walk to the play shed, make a PB&J sandwich, etc.
2. As the teacher, follow their directions aloud, exactly as written. Do not add any other movements, etc. to demonstrate. (It's funny and also harder to do than it appears.)  
EXAMPLE: When I used to do it with kids, I'd demo how to put on a jacket per their verbal directions. If they said, put my arms in the jacket, I did it upside down and backward unless they wrote specific directions that prevented that motion.
3. Turn them loose writing their own how-to.
4. Demonstrate their directions and enjoy the craziness!
5. Older students might enjoy illustrating their how-to.

## Captions

1. Pass out single frame cartoons or photos of news events, sports, etc. with the captions removed.
2. Ask the students to write new captions or a short story.
3. Share their captions/stories.

## Sensory Poem or Story

1. Read a poem or story that used sensory images:
  - a. The Colors of the Day by XXXX (color words)
  - b. Imagine a Night by XXX (visual impact)
2. Discuss the senses: touch, hear, sound, taste, smell. Maybe you can find a book on senses
3. Pick 1 or 2 senses to write about.
4. Create a word list for each sense you plan to use before you start writing.
5. Select a simple topic: foods, weather, their bedroom, a favorite place to visit, playing with friends, favorite holiday, their pets, etc.
6. Share the stories aloud.

## Create a New Animal

1. Use your imagination to write about a new character just discovered in the forest, jungle, city, ocean, polar, or desert location.
2. Draw the animal but do not show the drawing to anyone.
3. Exchange papers so a student must read the description then draw the animal.  
Compare it to the animal the author drew.
4. Discuss the reason for the differences.

## Mystery Character

1. Write a paragraph to describe a favorite fictional character **without using their name or any specific detail about where they live.**

Here are sample starter sentences:

- a. **Harry Potter** would be described as a **boy** with magic powers **who lived away from home.**
  - b. **Sleeping Beauty** would become a beautiful **girl** who lived in a **huge house.**
  - c. **Fancy Nancy** becomes a **girl** who likes colorful words.
  - d. **Sponge Bob** becomes a **squishy object** that lives **underwater.**
2. The last line written shares a clue that helps the audience discover the identity of the mystery character.

## Book Review (like Reading Rainbow)

What is one of your favorite books?

1. Write a paragraph that share the story line but doesn't give away any surprises in the book.
2. Tell us why you like it (Be specific about the characters, the setting or the subject.
3. Instead of saying "I really liked it." or "It was funny," tell us what made the book special.

## Mad Libs

1. Encourage students to select a topic that interests them.
2. Have them write up to 10 sentences about their topic.
3. Ask them circle 10-15 key words in their writing that represent nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
4. Edit their writing, leaving a line for each selected/circled words.
5. Reproduce the writing for the class to enjoy.



# Story Genres

## Expository Non-Fiction

Explains information and ideas  
Uses illustration with captions, labels, diagrams  
Creates sections with headings  
Ex: Comets, Anasazi Indians

## Fables

1-2 main characters  
Outsmarts others  
Lesson learned  
Ex: The Tortoise and The Hare

## Fantasy

Invented world and characters  
Anything can happen  
Ex: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

## Informational Narrative/Fiction

Presents facts and information

## Realistic Fiction

Characters and events are like real people and events  
Main character has a problem  
Contains dialogue, details, descriptive language  
Ex: The Oxcart Man

## Poetry

Uses images, figurative language, sensory details  
Expresses emotion and ideas with minimal words (uses simile, etc.)  
Creates rhythm  
Ex: Where the Sidewalk Ends, Something Big Has Been Here

## Historical Fiction

Historical events (past events from 1 time period)  
Portrays as if characters are real  
Setting as important at main events  
Ex: The Cabin Faced West

## Fairy Tale

“Once upon a time”  
Main character uses magic to solve problems  
Events occur in 3’s  
Ex: Cinderella

## **Folk Tale**

Story passed down over time  
“Once, long ago..”  
Animals behave/talk as humans  
Presents a lesson  
Ex: Pelé, Raven, Coyote stories

## **Tall Tale**

Main character is clever, “bigger than life”; defeats a powerful foe  
Uses humor and imagination  
Main character creates lakes, canyons, etc.  
Ex; Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill

## **Native American Tales/Legends**

Story passed down over time  
Clever animals show how the world changed (“and that is how..”)  
Ex. How Raven Stole the Moon

## **Science Fiction**

Set in space, inside the earth, etc.  
Uses science, invention and fantasy  
Characters achieve success through new or invented technology  
Ex: Spy Kid, Star Wars

## **Mystery**

Hidden problem, “red herrings”, false leads  
Main character must uncover the truth  
Ex: Nate the Great, Cam Jensen

## **Add-on-Story**

1 character has a problem  
1 by 1 characters arrive to help solve the problem  
Together they solve the problem or create a surprise ending  
Ex: Stone Soup, If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

## Let's Write!

My Family

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My Pets

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Favorite Places

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Favorite Sports

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Yummy or Yucky Food

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Family Trips

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Favorite Things

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Favorite Stories/Books

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Crazy Dreams

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An A-B-C Book about

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If I Could be invisible

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Best Holidays/Events

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Imaginary Characters

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Imaginary Places

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Super Powers

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If I were:

an eagle

a space traveler

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My Rules for:  
being a friend

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A Book about

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How to:  
make a kite

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The Magic .....  
pencil  
computer

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A Fairy Tale about:

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A Newspaper about:

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A Mystery

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A Space Adventure

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A Science Booklet

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# Word Wizardry

Change *one letter at a time* to transform the following words.

r a i n (change the 'n' to 'l' and make **r-a-i-l**)

---- (change the 'r' in ra-i-l to 'h' and make **h-a-i-l**)

h a i l

Try these:

c a f e

----

----

----

c o o k

h e a d

----

----

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f o o t

f o u l

----

----

----

s h o t

b r e a d

----

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----

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-----

f l o u r

s l o w

----

----

----

----

d r i p

Now turn the paper over and test your patience! Transform the following words: (It make take many steps and even fill the page!)

one > two

four > five

seven > eight

messy > clean

soda > milk

moon > star



# How to Write an Interesting Non Fiction Story

\_\_\_ Brainstorm ideas for a story.

\_\_\_ Select 1 topic      Who OR What?

\_\_\_ Share the setting: place, time, century, season.      Where? When?

\_\_\_ Select interesting details and problems.      What? Why?

\_\_\_ Detail #1

\_\_\_ Problems

\_\_\_ Detail #2

\_\_\_ The ACTIONS you want readers to take

\_\_\_ Detail #3

\_\_\_ Write a Rough Draft (skip lines!!)

\_\_\_ Story Checklist (**Check 3 times: by self, with a student editor, with an adult editor**)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ beginning, middle, and ending

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ **interesting** details and adjectives: **noteworthy facts**

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ **active, interesting** verbs

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ sentences make sense and LIMIT:

                  use of *an, and then, then, next,*

                  repeating the same idea and words over and over

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ use of **senses**: hear, see, smell, touch, taste as appropriate

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ use & indent **proper** paragraphs

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ **proper** punctuation (periods, commas, quotation marks, etc.)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ **proper** capitalization

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ subheadings, graphs, illustrations, charts

**ReREAD one more time.** Make changes. Send to be printed.

# How to Write an Interesting Fiction Story

\_\_\_ Brainstorm ideas for a story.

\_\_\_ Select 1 or more characters to star in your story. Who?

\_\_\_ Select an interesting setting: place, time, season. Where? When?

\_\_\_ Select interesting problems to solve (3 or more are best) What? Why?

\_\_\_ Problem #1

\_\_\_ Problem #3 **BIGGEST Problem**

\_\_\_ Problem #2

\_\_\_ Other Problems

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- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ beginning, middle, and ending
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ characters are interesting
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ **active, interesting** verbs
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ sentences make sense and LIMIT:
  - use of *an, and then, then, next,*
  - repeating the same idea and words over and over
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- Step away as long as possible before you write your final copy (to turn in).



Instead of...

Walk

step

pace

lurch

waddle

skip

tiptoe

slither

Smile

grin

smirk

Look

see

watch

notice

spot

glance

Laugh

giggle

chuckle

joke

## **What's the Author's Job?**

Write their best article, story, etc. writing.

Check for errors.

Read it aloud to self.

Ask a student to listen and help edit the writing.

## **What Does an Editor Do?**

Actively listen as the author reads their work aloud.

Share the parts of the writing that “work”.

Ask questions about unclear parts of the writing.

Suggest changes to enhance the writing

Help with spelling and writing conventions.

## **What's the Author's Next Step?**

Read over the suggestion from the student editor/teacher.

Let the writing “sit” before you make any changes.

Make changes and re-read before final/finished work.

# Ways Characters Act

active  
adventurous  
afraid  
angry  
annoyed  
babyish  
bored  
bossy  
busy  
calm  
charming  
cheerful  
clever  
clumsy  
competitive  
concerned  
confident  
confused  
considerate  
cowardly  
cruel  
daring  
determined  
dishonest  
eager  
easy-going  
embarrassed  
energetic  
excited  
fidgety  
foolish  
friendly  
frustrated  
funny  
gentle  
grouchy  
happy

helpful  
hopeful  
imaginative  
impatient  
impolite  
impatient  
independent  
jealous  
lazy  
lonely  
loyal  
lucky  
mean  
moody  
mysterious  
nervous  
noisy  
obedient  
obnoxious  
peaceful  
persistent  
picky  
pleasant  
proud  
puzzled  
quiet  
relieved  
respectful  
restless  
rude  
scared  
secretive  
selfish  
silly  
sincere  
smart  
sneaky

stingy  
strange  
strict  
stubborn  
sweet  
talented  
talkative  
terrified  
thankful  
thoughtful  
thoughtless  
timid  
touchy  
trusting  
uncontrolled  
unfriendly  
unhappy  
unselfish  
upset  
useful  
warm-hearted  
weak  
worried

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Tools

H E I G H T P Q S O X I D E T A I L S F  
 E X R G R R N Z C H P R U F E J N I L R  
 Y E B H O C B I O F L E L A L I G C P I  
 G T Q B S X T O L G I T X M J D X G S E  
 T A L E N T S V O O O C A I F S C N P N  
 V E R B S G O D R V I A D L E N I I O D  
 M N O I T U L O S E H R D Y A O T T V S  
 G E C A L P H T R I B A R T R I S T R I  
 J H Q W E M I T Q E J H E H S T I E Z Q  
 K W E G K S Y E F M X C S H D C L S Q Q  
 S E L A V J S F A A V K S E C A A X W Q  
 E I O H I I A M V N R M S Y O L E C S S  
 M G C R S Q T P O K E U R E V C R R E O  
 A H A O P A N T R C H S M E I J C Z N R  
 N T T T O S A E I I T U Q E T B B H S O  
 S L I I R J F W T N A G U X Y I B L E E  
 R I O D T G L C E C E F R G P E R O S N  
 D H N E S L M T S C W B D V I Z M W H E  
 S S Y P X B R O L O C R I A H K U U W M  
 F I C T I O N B M Z C V Y G E N R E C Y

ACTIONS	NAMES
ADDRESS	NICKNAME
BIRTHPLACE	PROBLEM
CHARACTER	REALISTIC
COLOR	SENSES
DETAILS	SETTING
EDITOR	SOLUTION
ENEMY	SPORTS
EYE	TALENTS
FAMILY	TIME
FANTASY	VERBS
FAVORITES	WEATHER
FEARS	WEIGHT
FICTION	WRITER
FRIENDS	
GENRE	
HAIRCOLOR	
HEIGHT	
HOBBIES	
LOCATION	